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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6198
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0043
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 000391

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STATE FOR WHA/CCA AND EUR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/27/2028

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PL](#) [CU](#)

SUBJECT: FM SIKORSKI ON PROPOSAL FROM CUBA ON PRISONER
RELEASE

REF: WARSAW 388

Classified By: Ambassador Victor H. Ashe for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) On the margins of a meeting to pass a non-paper on Polish cooperation with the United States on the Missile Defense initiative, Polish FM Radek Sikorski raised a proposal for releasing political prisoners passed by Cuban authorities to the United States through Poland. The substance of the non-paper on missile defense is reported reftel. Sikorski said that the Polish government had been approached by the Cubans, to ask whether Poland would be willing to pass a message to the United States, and then play an intermediary role, with respect to a proposed release of political prisoners. The substance of the proposal was that Cuba would release its political prisoners in exchange for the release of Cuba's "five heroes" currently being held in U.S. detention. When Ambassador asked the source of the offer, Sikorski said he did not know but that the GOP was satisfied the source was legitimate. He said that he designated MFA Under Secretary Ryszard Schnepf as the contact to pursue further questions or discussions. Schnepf is the MFA's Latin America expert, and is scheduled to meet with Cuba Coordinator Caleb McCarry on March 31, during McCarry's upcoming visit to Warsaw.

¶2. (C) Sikorski said that he would be surprised if the U.S. agreed to the proposal. He speculated that the Cubans approached the GOP because of Poland's close ties with the United States, and Poland's similar views on Cuba. Ambassador said the mere fact of the proposal may speak to the broader desire by the Cubans to engage. Sikorski joked that his ministry had been "shaken to its foundation" after the Cubans cancelled a planned visit to Cuba by the MFA's Americas Director in response to Sikorski's public comments following Fidel Castro's resignation from office. Sikorski said "a Communist tyrant has left office. Good riddance."

ASHE